PARAPHERNALIA OF A KOREAN SORCERESS IN UNITED STATES NATIONAL MUSEUM.

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INTRODUCTION.

The collection described in this paper consists of paraphernalia of a Korean sorceress or exorcist employed in the exercise of her calling. The various articles were acquired by the United States National Museum in 1896 through the agency of the late Hon. W. W. Rockhill, formerly envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of the United States to China. It is at present installed in the Section of Historic Religions in the old building of the Museum.

THE RELIGION OF KOREA.[1]

The earliest religion of the Koreans was very probably like that of most primitive peoples, some species of animism, consisting in the worship of the powers and elements of nature conceived as spirits. In 372 A. D. Buddhism was introduced into Korea from China, which by the middle of the sixth century was fully established, and for three centuries, from the tenth to the fourteenth, was the dominant religion of Korea, exercising also great political influence. With the accession of the last reigning dynasty of Korea (the Ni Taijo) Buddhism fell into disgrace and Confucianism was established as the official cult. Confucian ethics are still the basis of morality and the social order. Ancestor worship is also universal. It is however, shamanism, which is the belief in a host of inferior deities or spirits, for the greater part malevolent, who determine the fortunes of life, and are to be appeased or coerced by means of spells or incantations and offerings—a survival of the primitive animism, that dominates the broad masses of Korea. To the Korean the world is populous

[1] It is to be remembered, with regard to the statements made in the following pages, that what was true in Korea yesterday may not be true to-day or will not be true to-morrow. Things and conditions are now changing in the "immovable east," and it may be assumed that the present political and social status of Korea, as part of the empire of Japan, is also exercising a modifying influence on the religious views and practices of the people.

with active and malevolent beings who are ready at any moment to fall upon him in wrath. "If he goes among the mountains, they are there; if he goes into his inner room, they are there; if he travels to the remotest corner of the earth, they will follow him."[1] They haunt every tree, mountain, watercourse; they are on every roof, ceiling, fireplace, and beam; they fill the chimney, the living room, and the kitchen; they waylay the traveler on the road; in short, they are everywhere. To their influence the Korean attributes every ill by which he may be afflicted, bad luck in any transaction, official malevolence, loss of power or position, and especially sickness, whether sudden or prolonged.

The countless legions of spirits which populate the earth, the clouds, and the air, and are lurking everywhere, may be divided according to their attitude to man, into two main classes: (1) Demons in the proper sense—that is, self-existent spirits whose designs are always malicious, and spirits of departed persons, who died in poverty and distress and are now naked, hungry, and shivering vagrants, and therefore inflict calamities on the living who neglect to supply their wants; and (2) spirits whose natures are partly kindly, and ghosts of prosperous and good people. But even these are easily offended and act with extraordinary capriciousness.[2]

EXORCISTS AND SORCERERS.

There are two classes of shamans[3] or sorcerers in Korea: The Pansu and the Mutang. They do not constitute an order, nor are they linked by a common organization, but are nevertheless practically recognized as a sort of priesthood, inasmuch as they are the mediators and intercessors between the spirits and the people. The word Pansu is composed of *pan*, "to decide," and *su*, "destiny," which designate the bearer of the name as a "fortune-teller." But this describes the office of the Pansu only in part. Mutang is also made up of two parts, *mu*, "to deceive," and *tang*, "company." The individual is sometimes called *mu-nyu* "deceiving woman." So that Mutang may be

[1] H. B. Hulbert, The Passing of Korea, New York, 1906, p. 408.

[2] The belief in the possibility of the reappearance of the ghost or specter of the dead, either by being raised from the nether-world by a sorcerer or sorceress (comp. i Samuel xxviii, 11 ff.), or returning on its own accord, with the power of inflicting harm on the living, was also general among the ancient Semites and Egyptians, and is still in vogue in the East. Especially were and are still dreaded the spirits of such as died a premature or violent death or who had not received the requisite funerary rites and offerings. Compare Morris Jastrow, Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens, Giessen, 1905, vol. 1, pp. 358, 372; R. Campbell Thompson, Semitic Magic, Its Origin and Development, London, 1905, pp. 2, 7, 18, 93; A. E. W. Budge, Egyptian Magic, London, 1901, p. 219; Georg Steindorff, The Religion of the Ancient Egyptians, New York, 1905, p. 119; James Henry Breasted, Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt, New York, 1912, p. 192; T. Canaan, Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel (Abhandlungen des Hamburgishen Kolonialinstituts, vol. 20, Hamburg, 1914, p. 11). In like manner was it believed that the sorcerers by their exorcisms could "lay" such perturbed spirits.

[3] "Shaman may be applied to all persons, male or female, whose profession is to have direct dealings with demons and to possess the power of securing their good will and averting their malignant influences by various magical rites, charms, and incantations, to cure diseases by exorcisms, to predict future events, and to interpret dreams."—I. B. Bishop, Korea and Her Neighbors, p. 401.

rendered, "deceiving crowd," or "bad lot." The office of the Pansu is restricted to blind men, perhaps owing to the common belief among primitive peoples that those who have been deprived of physical sight have been given an inner spiritual vision. The Mutang is always a woman, generally from the lower classes and of bad repute, and her calling is considered the very lowest in the social scale.

While the Pansu is, as it were, born or made by dint of his loss of eyesight, the Mutang enters upon her office in consequence of a "supernatural call," consisting in the assurance of demoniacal possession, the demon being supposed to have become her double and to have superimposed his personality upon hers. The "possession" is often accompanied by hysterical and pathological symptoms. The spirit may seize any woman, maid or wife, rich or poor, plebeian or patrician, and compel her to serve him, and on receiving the "call of the spirit" a woman will break every tie of custom and relationship, leave home and family to become henceforth a social outcast, so that she is not even allowed to live within the city walls. But notwithstanding her low social status, her services are in constant demand. "In traveling through the country, the *mutang* or sorceress is constantly to be seen going through the various musical and dancing performances in the midst of a crowd in front of a house where there is sickness."[1] And at the close of the nineteenth century the fees annually paid in Korea to the sorcerers were estimated at $750,000.[2]

RELATION OF THE PANSU AND MUTANG TO THE SPIRITS.

The Pansu acts as master of the spirits, having gained by his potent formulæ and ritual an ascendency over them. By his spells he can direct them, drive them out, and even bury them. The Mutang is supposed to be able to influence them through her friendship with them. She has to pray to them and to coax them to go. By her performances she puts herself *en rapport* with the spirits and is able to ascertain their will and to name the ransom for which they will release the victim who is under torment.

FUNCTIONS OF THE PANSU.

While in practice the functions of the Pansu and the Mutang largely overlap, so that at times the one may be called to perform the services of the other, theoretically they hold two distinct fields in the domain of the spirits, corresponding to their different attitudes to the spirits.

The services of the Pansu may be comprised under two general heads: (1) Divination (*chum*), and (2) exorcism (*kyung*). The former occupies by far the larger part of his energies. In his capacity as

[1] I. B. Bishop, Korea and Her Neighbors, p. 400.
[2] Encyclopædia Britannica, ed. 11, vol. 15, p. 911.

fortune teller and clairvoyant he is consulted for all imaginable relations of life—whether, for instance, an offender will escape punishment, or a deserving man will be rewarded, what will happen during the day, the week, the month, and up to the point of death; what was one's condition in a former state of existence; how to recover a lost article; what is the condition of a distant friend or relation; whether a tree may be cut down or not (because of the spirit's inhabiting it); whether a dream that one has had augurs good or evil; when one is to marry in order to secure happiness; when a son will be born; whether a woman should give birth to a child in her own house or go to some other place until the child is born, and the like.

For obtaining his answers the Pansu employs three systems of divination: (1) Dice boxes (*san-tong*, "number box"); (2) coins (*ton-jun*, "money divination"), and (3) Chinese characters (*chalk-chum*, "book divination")

For the dice-box divination, also called tortoise divination, because the box was formerly in shape of a tortoise,[1] a box containing eight small metal rods or bamboo splinters, having in order from one to eight notches. The Pansu makes three throws of one rod or splinter each, and from the combination of the notches on them he works out the answer to the question. In the money divination three coins out of four which he holds in his hand are thrown in the same manner as in the preceding method, and the combination of the characters on them yield the supposed answer; while for the book divination (the highest form), he learns the hour, day, month, and year of the birth of the inquirer, and from the Chinese characters which depict these four dates he determines the answer. The responses are given in an enigmatic poetical formula which is capable of a double meaning, like the Delphic oracles of yore.

The performance of exorcism by a Pansu is described in The Korea Review [2] as follows:

> The Pansu comes into the presence of the afflicted and food is laid out as for a feast. The Pansu invites the various spirits to come and feast, such as the house spirit, the kitchen spirit, the door spirit. He orders them to go and invite to the feast the evil spirit that has caused the disease, and if he will not come, to call upon the master spirit to compel him to come. When he arrives the Pansu bids him eat and then leave the place and cease to torment the patient. If he consents, the fight is over, but he probably will not submit so easily, in which case the Pansu gets out the book, "Thoughts on the works of the Jade Emperor in Heaven," and chants a stave or two. The mystic power of the book paralyses the imp, and he is seized and imprisoned in a stone bottle and securely corked down. In some cases he is able to burst the bottle, and then he will be invited again to a feast and subdued by the book. He is then put into a bottle, but this time the cork is made of peach wood which has a peculiar power over

[1] "The tortoise is the center of a great circle of pleasing superstitions, and hence is one of a set of symbols oftenest employed in Corean art. The practice of divination is mostly associated with tortoise shell, the figuring of a tortoise's back having a mystic signification."—W. E. Griffis, Corea, the Hermit Nation, p. 303.

[2] Pp. 387-388; also see I. B. Bishop, Korea and Her Neighbors, p. 405.

imps, and the bottle is beaten with peach twigs to reduce the imp to complete lessness. The bottle is then delivered to a Mutang, and she is told to go in a c direction, which will prevent the return of the imp, and bury the bottle in the gr The cure is now supposed to be complete.

The instruments of exorcism used by the Pansu are a drum, bals, a divination box, a wand or wands.

FUNCTIONS OF THE MUTANG.

More varied than the functions of the Pansu are the pacifica and propitiations, called *kauts* or *kuts*, performed by the Mut The kaut may be carried out either at the house of the patient the home of the Mutang, or at some shrine or temple, called *tang*, cated to some spirits, which are seen on the hillsides in Korea. is occasionally the case, the Mutang belongs to a noble family, s allowed by her family to ply her trade only in her own house. T who require her services send the required fee and necessary ings, and the ceremony is performed by the Mutang in her own h or at the tang.

Her equipment consists of a number of dresses, some of very costly; a drum, shaped like an hourglass, about 4 feet copper cymbals; a copper gong; a copper rod with small bel tinklers suspended from it by copper chains;[1] a pair of telesc baskets;[2] strips of silk and paper banners which float around h she dances; fans; umbrellas; wands and images of men and ani (See Plates 108–111.)

The service of the Mutang most in demand is the healing o sick. If a sick man believes that his distemper has been cause a spirit, he sends to the Mutang to describe the symptoms and what spirit is doing the mischief. The Mutang may declare name of the spirit without going to the patient's house, or may that she must see the patient first. On retaining her fee she n a "fortunate" day for the ceremony, which will be performed e at her house or shrine or at the patient's house, according t seriousness of the ailment and the fee he can pay.

A performance of such a kaut at the house of the patient i scribed by Mrs. Bishop as follows:[3]

In a hovel with an open door a man lay very ill. The space in front was matte inclosed by low screens, within which were Korean tables loaded with rice

[1] Some Biblical commentators explain the small golden bells which fringed the high priest's robe (Exodus xxviii, 33; xxxix, 25) as a survival of the primitive practice of the employment of bells as to frighten away demons and evil spirits. The custom referred to in Zechariah xiv, 20, of hanging the foreheads and round the necks of horses, may also belong to the same circle of ideas. Numerou bells, apparently amulets, have been found in the excavations of Gezer, Palestine; see Palestine E tion Fund Quarterly Statement, 1904, p. 353, pl. 4, figs. 4 and 5.

[2] The baskets are used chiefly in the case of cholera, which is supposed to result from rats climbin in the human interior. The scratching sound made by rubbing the baskets against one another, resembles the noise made by cats, is expected to drive out those rodents. On other occasions t used to summon the spirits.

[3] Korea and Her Neighbors, p. 350.

boiled rice, stewed chicken, sprouted beans, and other delicacies. In this open space squatted three old women, two of whom beat large drums, shaped like hourglasses, while the third clashed large cymbals. Facing them was the Mutang or sorceress, dressed in rose-pink silk, with a buff gauze robe, with its sleeves trailing much on the ground, over it pieces of paper resembling a shinto *gohei*,[1] decorated her hair, and a curious cap of buff gauze with red patches upon it, completed the not inelegant costume. She carried a fan, but it was only used in one of the dances. She carried over her left shoulder a stick, painted with bands of bright colors from which hung a gong which she beat with a similar stick, executing at the same time a slow rhythmic movement accompanied by a chant. From time to time one of the ancient drummers gathered on one plate pieces from the others and scattered them to the four winds for the spirits to eat, invoking them saying, "Do not trouble this house any more, and we will again appease you by offerings."[2] The exorcism lasted 14 hours, until 4 in the next morning, when the patient began to recover. . . . Mrs. Tayler adds:[3]

I have witnessed several of these dances, and it appeared to me that the sorceress produced in herself a sort of ecstasy which increased in force until at length she sank on the ground utterly exhausted. I could not but feel that the banging of drums, and the clashing of cymbals wielded by her attendants together with the whirling motions and violent gestures of the Mutang herself, must at times, themselves, give the *coup de grace* to the poor patient.

In case of smallpox (*kwe-yuk tasin*), the universal scourge of Korean childhood, the spirit who is supposed to have caused it, is treated with the utmost respect. The parents do obeisance to the suffering child, which for the time being is inhabited by the spirit, and address it in honorific terms. On the appearance of the disease the Mutang is called to honor the arrival of the spirit with a feast and fitting ceremonial. Little or no work is done in the house in order not to disturb the "honorable guest." No member of the household may cut the hair, wear new clothes, sweep the house, or bring any goods into the house. No animal must be killed in the house, because if blood flows, it will make the patient scratch and cause his blood to flow.[4] No washing or wall papering must be undertaken, for this will cause the nose of the patient to be stopped up; and if there are neighbors whose children have not had the malady, they rest likewise, lest, displeased with their want of respect, the spirit should deal harshly with them. On the thirteenth day from the appearance of

[1] The *gohei* consists of strips of white paper, cut out of one piece, suspended from a wand. It is one of the important objects which are placed in the Shinto temples, supposed to be the resting place of the *kami* or spirit.

[2] A quotation from A. Goodrich-Freer, Some Jewish Folklore from Jerusalem, Folklore, 1904, vol. 15, pt. 2, p. 186, in R. C. Thompson, Semitic Magic, etc., p. 102, as suggesting somewhat of a parallel to the last phase of the kaut described, may find, in much abridged form, a place here: When a Jew is afflicted with madness, the falling sickness, or the like, the witch-doctors (among other things) prepares a little wheat, barley, salt, water, milk, honey, four or six eggs, and some sweetmeats, or sugar, and mixing all this at midnight, she scatters some of the mixture round the sickbed, on the threshold, and in the four corners of the room, reciting in a whisper a prayer or an incantation which closes with the words: "And let this honey (or sugar) be to sweeten your mouths and palates, the wheat and barley to feed your cattle and sheep, and the water and salt to establish peace, friendship, love, brotherhood, and everlasting covenant of salt between us and you." Here she breaks the eggs and pours the same in the aforementioned places, kneels, and prostrates herself, kisses the ground several times, and proceeds with these words: "Here I offer you life for life, in order that you may restore the life of the patient."

[3] Koreans at Home, p. 65.

[4] By dint of sympathetic magic.

the disease, when danger is supposed to be passed, the Mutang is again summoned, and a farewell banquet is given to the spirit. A miniature wooden horse, loaded with food and some coins, and bedecked with a red umbrella and small flags, is placed upon the roof of the house. This outfit is provided for the spirit in taking his departure. (See plate 112.) The Mutang bids him farewell, asking him to deal kindly with the patient and the family, to let the sick fully recover without being badly marked.[1]

The death of a Korean does not terminate his dependence on the ministrations of the Mutang. The spirit of the departed is believed to hover about the house for some time after leaving the body, having some last words to speak. The Mutang is required to serve as his mouthpiece for his valedictory. Food is set out, the baskets are scraped to summon the spirit who then enters the Mutang and communicates through her to the family his last wishes, counsels, and exhortations. The members of the family have their cry and say their farewells, after which they fall to consuming the food. A more elaborate ceremony, with the never-wanting banquet, in connection with death, is performed by the Mutang at a shrine in honor of the judges or rulers of the nether world to secure their goodwill for the departed.

The surviving members of the family need no less the services of the Mutang. The unclean spirits of death (as also of birth) have for the time being driven out the guardian spirits of the household, and the Mutang has to bring them back. Their whereabouts is found by means of a wand cut from a pine tree to the east of the house which is set working by the spells of the Mutang, and by prayers and offerings they are induced to return to their place.

As public functionary, the Mutang comes into consideration in the triennial festa lasting three to four days, which is observed to propitiate the tutelary spirit of the locality and to obtain his favor during the coming three years.

Divination is practiced by the Mutang by means of chimes and rice. The latter consists of throwing down some grains of rice on a table and noting the resulting combination. The divining chime is a hazel wand with a circle of tiny bells at one end, which the Mutang shakes violently, and in the din thus created she hears the answer of the spirit.

[1] It may be that the original idea underlying the sending away of the spirit on a horse was that he carry off the malady. A parallel to it would be Leviticus xiv, 4, where, for the purification of a leper, one bird is to be killed as an offering; the other, charged with the disease, is to be let loose into the open field. The horse seems in general to play something of the part of scapegoat in Korean magic. Thus in case the spirit of a disease is obstinate, and refuses to depart the Mutang orders the making of a picture of three or seven horses on paper, and with three or seven small coins wrapped up in it throw into the street (Korea Review, p. 148). For the transference of evils to animals in general, see J. G. Frazer, The Golden Bough, vol. 3, London, 1900, p. 1.